

Black History Month 2014: The Native Sons and Daughters of Alabama

Honoring Wenonah High School Alabama's Class 5A State Girls Basketball Champions 2014

March 6, 2014

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Wenonah High School Lady Dragons on winning the State of Alabama title in the 5A State Basketball Championship on Saturday, March 1, 2014. On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, I pay tribute to the Lady Dragons for their exemplary athleticism and teamwork as well as the outstanding leadership of Head Coach Emanuel Bell and his coaching staff. We are extremely proud of these young ladies for their stellar performance!

Wenonah's championship victory came at the end of an extraordinary season of 27 wins and 7 losses. Coach Bell's longstanding motto for his team is "hard work pays off." He not only commands the best from his team, he commits his personal time year-round to molding the young ladies he leads. The 20 year veteran coach has been a driving force in producing winning teams and leading the Lady Dragons to multiple state titles. The 2013-2014 season was no different.

The Lady Dragons faced Sylacauga High School to clinch the state title on March 1, 2014. The rival squad was favored to win due to having one of the top scorers of the season but Coach Bell believed in his team. In a Birmingham News article, Coach Bell boldly expressed his confidence in the Lady Dragons. "Everybody kept asking, 'What are you going to do about that girl?'" said Coach Bell. "Hey, I've got eight girls. I've got 12 girls. If she can run with us, we've got a problem."

During the championship game, the Lady Dragons forged ahead with three players who contributed double digits in scoring. The group effort would sustain the Lady Dragons as they worked to contain their opponent's scoring powerhouse.

Wenonah took the lead in the opening minute of the game and trailed briefly late in the first half. However, the Lady Dragons went into halftime with a five point lead. With 5:28 left in the game, both teams were tied at 36 before Wenonah pulled away with a 6-0 run to secure their 57-46 victory. Jameka Holmes led the Lady Dragons with 25 points, followed by Aja Cumbie with 12 points and 11 rebounds, and 10 points from Kaitlyn Rodgers. Holmes added 15-of-21 free throws and had six steals.

As the daughter of a high school basketball coach, I know this decisive victory is also the result of the tremendous efforts of both the players and coaching staff of Wenonah High School. The exemplary leadership and dedicated support from the coaching staff was a major factor in the success of the Lady Dragons. I commend Head Coach Emanuel Bell for his program of excellence.

Mr. Speaker, the Lady Dragons of Wenonah High School are another fine example of the "champions" we breed in Alabama's 7th Congressional district. On behalf of the 7th Congressional District, the State of Alabama and this nation, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the accomplishments of the Wenonah High School Girls Basketball Team for their victory in the Class 5A Alabama State Championship.

Congratulations. Go Lady Dragons.